



PEDRO E. SEGARRA  
MAYOR

## CITY OF HARTFORD

Hartford Police Department  
253 High Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06103  
P: (860) 757-4000  
police.hartford.gov



JAMES C. ROVELLA  
CHIEF OF POLICE

**TESTIMONY OF CHIEF JAMES C. ROVELLA, HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT  
TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF  
H.B. 1163  
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF URBAN YOUTH DELINQUENCY AND VIOLENCE.**

**April 15, 2013**

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee., I am currently the Chief of Police of the City of Hartford Connecticut and have been a police officer in excess of thirty-one years in the State of Connecticut. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the **Hartford Police Department** in support of H.B. 1163, *An Act Concerning The Prevention of Urban Youth Delinquency and Violence.*

The City of Hartford has made great strides in reducing violence. Those advances have been achieved in a variety of different means to include but not limited to; restructuring and re-directing the efforts of the police department, collaboration and cooperation between numerous agencies including other city departments along with our state and federal partners. However, the sustainability of those strides is in jeopardy if not properly funded.

The Hartford Police Department has engaged in several different areas outside the normal response to crime and patrol duties, which are beginning to pay dividends in the areas of preventing youth delinquency and violence. Such areas are as follows;

- Preventing Recidivism through Organized Supervision, Partnerships, and Enhanced Relationships (PROSPER). With certain assumptions in play, the city is home to approximately 5,000 probationers. Keeping in mind high recidivism rates and probationers being our next violent crime victims and our next violent crime offenders, the police department, with analytical data, devised a cooperative effort with the Department of Probation. Since 2011, HPD, Community Service Officers (CSO) partner with a Probation officer to handle approximately 80 high-risk clients. There has been a significant reduction in the re-arrest rates in this high-risk population. Officers have noticed an increase in clients enrolling in schooling, obtaining driver's licenses and obtaining employment this type of collaboration should be enhanced and grown to include Juvenile offenders and the 650 registered sex offenders in the city.
- Police Athletic League (PAL) is located at the former Quirk School in Hartford. The building is in need of approximately 13 million dollar renovation. The PAL program has 800 children enrolled and services 50-70 children per day. From every application, emails from a parent and background review, the children are the cities most at risk population. The children are often from a single parent home left unsupervised by an adult who is working or trying to work. The parent and the children want that positive interaction with a police officer. The after school program engages children in homework/ schoolwork, activities and a meal plan. This program is in need of enhancement and expansion along with site development. Additions to the programs include young paid mentors.



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- The Hartford City Council and the Hartford Police Department's combined effort to engage the Faith Based ministries and population to engage in violence reduction has begun and is organized. Recognizing that it's not necessarily where your place of worship is located but rather where your parishioners live and work. Their influence and guidance is a force for the reduction or escalation of violence and prevention of youth delinquency. Three Hartford Police Community Service Officers are dedicated to the endeavor on a full time basis, one for each district of the city. The officer's duties and responsibilities include organization, structure and block watch formulation in each of their districts. This endeavor is the forming of a virtual army of devoted individuals willing to engage youth in positive guidance.
- Thirty percent of the cities aggravated assaults are a result of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Unit within the Major Crime Division of the Hartford Police Department works very closely with the court system and supporting agencies. The domestic violence unit is dedicated to the investigation of domestic violence and the arrest of the offender to include conviction. Those efforts, although very important are reactionary in nature. Beginning in June, 2013, the Domestic Violence Unit will engage in a very important prevention measures. The unit will identify the children who witness or surround the victim and offender of domestic violence. Those children drive our aggravated assault statistics five, ten and fifteen years down the road because it is a learned behavior. The unit forward those children to services to agencies better equipped to handle future issues such as anger management.
- Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC), I supplied written testimony to the committee dated April 5, 2013. By requiring schools and police to engage in Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) in communities where police are stationed within their local public schools, this fosters the collaboration necessary to ensure police officers do not replace school administrators in administering school discipline resulting in arrests for lower level, non-criminal offenses. It ensures that police stationed within schools stay focused on keeping students safe on a daily basis, not assume responsibility for the oversight of student discipline. School based arrests have dramatically declined. The Hartford School system and the Hartford Police Department are breaking that pipeline from school-based arrests, adult arrest to jail. Additional enhancements such as training, technology and personnel are needed to fully develop the program.

Our commitment to the citizens of Hartford is all the above and more. The city is the focal point for the economic revival and ultimately the survival of the region. I respectfully request the Hartford Police Department be included as a funding recipient for our ground level initiatives.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James C. Rovella".

James C. Rovella  
Chief of Police  
Hartford Police Department